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Viewing cable 09BUCHAREST153, A PERFECT STORM: CORRUPTION, RULE OF LAW, AND JUSTICE REFORMS TAKE CENTER STAGE IN ROMANIA

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09BUCHAREST153	2009-03-06 11:58	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Bucharest

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.kamikazeonline.ro/2011/04/morar-dna-n-2009-la-ambasada-sua-dgipi-si-dga-fac-politic-politica/>

P 061158Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9294
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 000153

STATE FOR EUR/FO (GARBER), EUR/CE, EUR/ERA, AND EUR/PGI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/27/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KJUS](#) [EU](#) [RO](#)
SUBJECT: A PERFECT STORM: CORRUPTION, RULE OF LAW, AND JUSTICE REFORMS TAKE CENTER STAGE IN ROMANIA

Classified By: CDA Jeri Guthrie-Corn for 1.5 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: An unexpected convergence of factors has recently brought matters involving the Rule of Law (ROL) and much-needed justice reform to the fore. Spate of Media Coverage on Rising Crime

¶3. (SBU) It is still unclear whether rising criminality in Romania is more media hype than a concrete phenomenon. The local press has been awash in stories about the opposition's decry of police budget cuts.

¶4. (C) Embassy contacts remain divided on the seriousness of the crime issue. We spoke recently with three members—two from the PNL and one from PSD. Scutaru also insisted that leadership turmoil in the Interior Ministry (e.g., four Interior Ministers in three months) and the resulting policy uncertainty have contributed to the problem. European Commission Worried Too

¶5. (C) European Commission contacts are also seized with the issue. Dorina Nastase, head of the EC Representation's Political Section, told us that the reports underscore lack of progress.

¶6. (C) The mid-February release of an interim European Commission monitoring report provided little comfort to Romanians expecting the EU to crack down on corruption. The report had not been maintained; investigations of high-level corruption remain blocked by parliament; accountability of magistrates still needs to be strengthened; and infighting, lack of coordination among crime-fighters, etc.

¶7. (C) The DNA report elicited unexpected comments from Prosecutor General Laura Kovesi, who criticized her erstwhile ally, DNA Chief Prosecutor.

¶8. (C) Infighting among other agency heads responsible for justice reforms has been endemic. In recent months, Prosecutor General Kovesi conflict with Basescu over the composition of the justice ministry.

¶9. (C) President Basescu on February 17 convened an emergency "Justice Summit" at Cotroceni Palace to approve an action plan to deal with justiciation. We met separately with three participants—Buda, Licu, and Macovei—who agreed that Basescu's meeting gave much-needed impetus to a joint action plan. Big-Bang Code Reform Will Be Centerpiece

¶10. (C) Our interlocutors said that the key decision at Basescu's justice summit was to create two separate ad hoc parliamentary committees to oversee justice sector reforms.

¶11. (C) Other Embassy contacts were leery of the fast-track option. Cristi Danileț and Adrian Neacsu, two founders of SoJust (Society for Just Society), told us that former PM Nastase is a corruption poster child.

¶12. (C) On March 4 in a 158–128 vote Parliament unblocked the criminal prosecution of former Prime Minister Nastase, delivering on one of the actions of the anti-corruption package.

¶13. (C) Press attention has also focused on Justice Minister Predoiu's proposal to revive the Protection and Anti-Corruption Service (SIPA) at the expense of the DNA.

¶14. (C) Comment: Our pick-up team of justice sector reformers is fraught with bad chemistry; many simply do not play well together. It is telling that GUTHRIE-CORN